

MISTAKES MADE SINCE 9/11/2001

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Madam Speaker, like many of my colleagues, I spent part of yesterday commemorating the horrific attacks on our Nation 5 years ago. It was a day to reflect on the courage and compassion demonstrated on September 11, 2001, by police officers, firefighters, medical personnel, and ordinary citizens. It was also a day to remember those who could not be saved and to say a prayer for the families, especially the young children, who were left behind.

For the first few minutes of his prime time speech last night, the President covered all those things. But, unfortunately, he used the rest of his time exploiting a national day of mourning to justify the occupation of Iraq, a disastrous policy and a failure that has led to untold death and destruction and has been rejected by the American people. He has done this from almost the very moment those planes hit the towers. The President once again blurred the distinction between Osama bin Laden and Saddam Hussein, even though it has been well established that one had nothing to do with the other.

Actually, the President must believe that the American people don't know the difference between the two men and the two countries. What an insult to the American people.

The fact is, we never finished the job in Afghanistan. Bin Laden remains on the run, even though we had him surrounded in Tora Bora nearly 5 years ago. Far from some paragon of freedom, much of Afghanistan is still dominated by Taliban rebels and warlords, with the opium trade remaining the country's dominant economic force.

From 9/11 on, the President has used his status as a wartime Commander in Chief to justify just about anything he wanted to do, without any oversight or accountability from the Republican-controlled Congress, running roughshod over the Constitution, wiretapping American citizens without a warrant and setting up secret gulags around the world.

9/11 cried out for genuine leadership, for a unifying figure who could comfort the Nation while acting intelligently, rather than impulsively, in the face of a new security threat.

To this day, however, the President uses 9/11 as a talking point to make a dishonest argument. Time and time again, he has made the decision to choose partisanship over statesmanship, taking every single opportunity to fracture national unity for a short-term political gain.

Worst of all, the President put Afghanistan aside and became sidetracked by his white whale in Iraq, using deception, spin and misinformation to push the Nation into an ill-fated war.

Fast forward a few years and look at the mess we are in: nearly 2,700 American soldiers are dead, and over 20,000 wounded; the occupation is costing our Nation dearly and our children and grandchildren will get stuck with the bill, a bill which is projected to top \$1 trillion.

And what have we gotten for our sacrifice? Well, we are now a global pariah, viewed with suspicion by even our closest allies, and despised as never before by our enemies. And we have more enemies. This policy has inspired more jihadists and more anti-American sentiment in the Muslim world. Instead of bringing hope to Iraq, we have ripped it apart at the seams. We lit the match that has engulfed Iraq in a bloody civil war, where thugs and vigilantes control the streets. At least 40,000 Iraqi civilians, and possibly many, many more, have been killed for the cause of their so-called liberation.

Our soldiers are not to blame. They do their jobs, and they do their jobs with honor and with valor. They do their jobs, despite being sent on an impossible mission under false pretenses without the proper training or equipment.

Madam Speaker, it is time to return these young people to their families where they belong. It is time, long past time, that we bring our troops home.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE SPEAKER PRO TEMPORE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair will remind Members not to make improper personal references toward the President.

COMMENTS ON COMMEMORATING THE EVENTS OF 9/11/2001 AND ON THE WAR ON TERROR

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Madam Speaker, I didn't want this week to pass without the appropriate recognition and the pointed recognition and offering of sympathy to the American people and to the victims who experienced a horrific tragedy on September 11, 2001.

In the next 48 hours, we will be debating on the floor of the House a resolution regarding 9/11. It would be good, Madam Speaker, if that resolution could focus on solutions. But because we are just a few days away from the November 2006 elections, I would venture to say that the majority in this House will attempt to cover up the major failures of making America more secure.

I pause for a moment again to reflect on the tears and pain that were expressed over the last couple of days by families of victims, those who worked at the World Trade Center, but also the firefighters and Port Authority police and police persons of New York and

others who were the heroes of the day and lost their lives.

I join with my colleagues to say that an appropriate tribute certainly to the first responders would be the right kind of compensation and long-term care for those survivors in tribute to those who lost their lives. I hope that tomorrow's debate could be stopped for a moment so that we could pass immediate legislation, legislation proposed by Congresswoman MALONEY, that would allow a response to the first responders who now still live. But, no, we will engage again in the one-upmanship of what this Republican majority believes they have done.

I would simply say to you, Madam Speaker, that it is little that they have done.

The Washington Post today says it right: "America Marks a Grim Anniversary." But I add the words, is there much reason for joy or commemoration that things are better? I would say not.

The New York Times today says: "Grim Outlook Seen in West Iraq," calling for more troops and aid. The assessment was prepared last month by Colonel Peter Devlin at the Marine headquarters in Anbar Province, one of the first times that a document like this has been made public.

We are literally failing in Iraq. The Secretary of Defense has already said they don't need any more troops. Frankly, they have dissipated the troops in the other parts of Iraq to send into Baghdad to get that under control. It is difficult to get a civil war under control.

Iraq does not pay tribute to the tragedy of 9/11 by giving to the families a sense that we are in charge of the war on terror. Iraq simply shows our failure and failed policies.

Madam Speaker, I would say to this body that rather than debate a resolution that is distorted and one-sided, I would ask that we roll up our sleeves and respond to the American people. And I think it is important for us to be balanced. There are allies around the world that really want to help us.

I have heard discussions from those in Egypt and Jordan and Qatar and Mideast alliances that we have had who desire to have an opportunity to work with Iraq, work in the Mideast, to bring resolution, to allow the existence of democratic states. But we have not offered to collaborate with these states.

Madam Speaker, I think it is important to note that Pakistan, which continuously is maligned and is not perfect, there is no doubt, but we should remind our colleagues that we should work with states like Pakistan that are Muslim-based, if you will, recognizing the difficulty of balancing the leadership in a Muslim state and fighting the war on terror.

There are those who draw together, who want to work with the United States to fight the war on terror, Muslims around the world, Muslims in the United States; but we must give them